
10 Reasons Why I Am a Member of the Church of Christ

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There are millions of people in this world who have never stopped to examine their religious position. Every person who is honest in his religion must know what he is trying to be in faith and practice. And no man who is honest in his religion will be willing to continue in a religious connection which he does not believe is right. If a man is doing and believing things he does not understand, he is not completely honest. If he is a member of a religious group which believes and practices things which he believes are wrong, he is certainly not honest with himself or with others.

It would be surprising to hear the answers that many people would in all honesty have to assign for their religious connection. Some are members of a church because it is the most popular in their town. Some go to a particular church because of a large membership, or a large and fine building. Some go for business and political as well as social reasons. Then there are those who would tell you that they are identified with a certain church because there are good people in it, or because they do some good, or because they teach some good things. These reasons are true of all religious bodies in the land. None, perhaps, could be found that does not have some good people, as well as some bad ones, in its fellowship. Perhaps

there are none that do not do some good from a moral point of view and that do not teach some truth. If these reasons are to be the basis of church membership, then everyone should join every church in the community. If such can serve as the basis for membership in one, it would be a good reason for becoming a member of all.

But all the churches teach contradictory doctrines, and by belonging to more than one a man would put himself in a position of obvious dishonesty and insincerity. This means but one thing: there is only one basis for religion that is honorable, and that basis is conviction. The only reason for being anything is because of what you believe. No one can honestly be a Baptist unless he actually knows what Baptist doctrine is, and believes it in his heart. For the same reason one cannot honestly be a Methodist without knowing what Methodism teaches and believing it in his heart. The same thing is true of any other religion connection.

Another common practice is for a man to transfer membership from one denomination to another on account of his wife, or his family, and in order to have peace in the home. This prostitutes religion and causes it to serve a purely social rather than a spiritual purpose. God frowns upon such clear insincerity in religion. For instance, suppose a man transfers his membership from the Baptist to a Methodist Church because of his wife, and not on the ground of conviction at all. Is he honest? Baptists teach that baptism is by immersion alone; Methodists teach that it is not, but can be performed by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, according to the convenience or preference of the candidate. Baptists teach that when a person is once saved and becomes a child of God, he cannot fall from grace or so sin as to be finally lost in hell; Methodists teach that a child of God can fall from grace and be finally lost.

You can readily see that because their doctrines are contradictory a man cannot transfer membership from one to another at will, and that there is no honest basis upon which it can be done except a change of conviction. Conviction is the only basis for any religious connection.

Just as conviction is the only acceptable basis for any religious affiliation, so there is but one acceptable basis for conviction, that is because it is taught in the Word of God. Why do you believe it? Where has God ever said it? The only reason for believing anything is because God said it. That is reason enough for believing anything and it is the only acceptable basis for anything that is believed. Religion simply cannot be put on the basis of personal judgment or what we may think. Nor can it exist upon the basis of human teaching whether it comes from mother and father, some prominent preacher, or some human creed. When we believe what we believe for such reasons it means that we have ignored the Word of God entirely. We must remember that *“faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God”* (Rom. 10:17). Believing a lie condemns (2 Thess. 2:11-12). Here is the order as God requires it: Religion must be founded upon conviction or faith; faith must be founded upon the Word of God. Faith must embrace what God has said, all that God has said, and only what God has said in order to be founded upon His word. Why do you believe what you believe? Where has God said it?

These considerations bring us to the announcement of our text for this study, *“But sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear”* (1 Pet. 3:15). With Christ established in our hearts this passage of scripture teaches that we should be always ready to give our reasons for what we are and for the hope

that we have. Yet those reasons should not be personal reasons based upon our own judgment and conceit; they should be given with “meekness and fear” and that means they must be based upon the Word of God. They must be Bible reasons or else our confidence is not in God, our trust is not in Him but in ourselves. Can you give Bible reasons for your faith, practice, worship, and all of your religious connections? We need to re-examine our positions religiously and once again test and try them in the light of God’s Word to see if they are based upon truth.

When thousands of early Christians met the persecutions sent against them by pagan Rome, and gladly died in the arena rather than deny Christ, they went so calmly to their death until the pagans who witnessed their death were prompted to ask, “What is the basis of their hope that they can thus die?” Surely a strong hope does have a foundation. No hope can be stronger than the assurance upon which it is based, and what better basis could one hope for than the promises of God? Hope based upon the promises of God can sustain us in any trial. We must be certain, however, that our hopes are not idle and baseless because we are not standing on the promises of God.

Why should anyone be willing to be a member of the church of Christ? What are the scriptural grounds for such a relationship? Why does such a relationship entitle one to the promises of God? In the discussion to follow we assign reasons for being a member of the church of Christ that are altogether scriptural and we offer these reasons for the careful investigation of every reader. They will stand the test of truth.

1. The church of Christ is built upon the foundation of eternal truth that Jesus is the son of God.

The foundation of any building determines its strength. In this respect the church of Christ is singular. It is founded upon no individual. Lutheranism is built upon Luther; Christian Science is founded upon Mary Baker Eddy; Adventism upon Mrs. Ellen G. White; Mormonism upon Joe Smith, and in a similar manner every denomination has been built upon some individual or some particular theory or doctrine. The church of Christ came into existence because it was a part of God's eternal purpose (Eph. 3:10-11). Jesus said, "*Upon this rock I will build my church*" (Matt. 16:18). The rock spoken of was the truth confessed by Peter, "*Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God.*" This being the foundation of the church, it is divine. Paul, on this same theme, wrote the Corinthians, "*For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ*" (1 Cor. 3:11). Your position religiously is no better than the foundation upon which you stand. If all you believe, practice, and teach comes from Christ and by his authority, then you are standing upon the proper foundation. If anything you have accepted in the name of religion comes from any other sources, then you are standing upon the wrong foundation. When the reason you believe what you believe is, that you have believed first that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, then your position is safe. But if you believe what Wesley, Luther, Calvin, or some other religious leader has taught and are a part of the religious movement founded by them, you have deserted Christ as your foundation. Why not just be a member of the church which recognizes as the only reason for its existence that fact that Jesus Christ is God's Son? Why not belong to the church proposed in God's plan from eternity and built by Jesus Christ himself? Such a position is bound to be absolutely safe.

2. The church of Christ recognizes Christ as its only head and only source of authority.

Members of the church of Christ accept the authority of Christ as complete, and believe that it excludes all other sources of authority. Christians are subject to the will of Christ and it alone. Jesus taught, *“All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth”* (Matt. 28:18). Paul declared that God gave Christ *“to be head over all things to the church, which is his body”* (Eph. 1:22, 23). That means that no one else has any authority over the church at all. If this is the truth, and the Word of God teaches it, then the claim Catholicism makes for the Pope as the head of the church on earth is not true. Every act of his and the edicts issued are all without divine recognition and the authority claimed is merely usurped. The same fact applies to all councils, conventions, synods, and every other form of organization that undertakes to exercise any authority in religious matters. None of them has any. All authority in religion belongs to Christ. His authority excludes all else. To be a Christian demands that we recognize only the authority of Christ, and refuse to be bound by any other in any matter.

Jesus drew a distinction between human and divine authority that should be carefully noted. When the Pharisees came to him and questioned him as to his authority, he replied by asking them a question: *“The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men?”* (Matt. 21:25). This is the issue. Is the thing you believe, practice, and teach from heaven, or from men? Did Christ authorize it? Have his inspired apostles taught it? If not, then it must be from men and to believe it or practice it will condemn rather than save. In Matthew 15:6-9, Jesus declared, *“And ye made void the word of God because of your tradition. Ye hypocrites well did Isaiah prophesy of you saying, This people honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far*

from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men.” Hence to recognize human authority in religion is to make your religion vain and void in the sight of God. No preacher, elder, or member of the church of Christ has any authority to legislate or bind one single rule upon anyone. Every member of the church of Christ is free under God to take Christ as his only lawgiver and to bow to his authority alone.

Furthermore, the church of Christ does not attempt to justify any practice by Old Testament authority. Much of the religion in this age is a combination or mixture of Old and New Testament authority. Many religious practices in which people today engage cannot be found in the teaching of the New Testament scriptures. This means that if those who practice them offer any Bible authority, they must go to the Old Testament to find it. Many times, these practices have no authority even in the Old Testament scriptures. The religious world needs to learn that even if a practice is authorized in the Old Testament, yet such authority does not justify its use in Christianity. In fact, the New Testament forbids the effort to justify ourselves by the authority of Moses and the prophets. Paul said, *“Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace”* (Gal. 5:4). Again he declared, *“God having in old times spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days, spoken unto us in his Son”* (Heb. 1:1-2). On the same point, John tells us, *“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ”* (John 1:17). We are under the system of grace and truth, and we are subject to the authority of Christ alone. Jesus said, *“All authority is given unto me, both in heaven and on earth”* (Matt. 28:18). John tells us that if we go onward and abide not in the teaching of Christ, we have not God (2 John 9).

The important principle is that Christianity is a religion established by the authority and teaching of Christ and is found in the New Testament scriptures. What Christ and the apostles in the New Testament have not taught is no part of the religion of Christ. You can learn how the Jews worshipped in the Old Testament and see what God's will concerning the patriarchs was, but if you want to be a Christian you must come to the revelation of the will of God through Christ in the New Testament scriptures. Religious teachers go to the Old Testament to justify infant church membership, the use of mechanical instruments of music in their worship, and the burning of incense. But they cannot practice those things as a part of Christianity until they can find them in the teachings of Christ and the apostles. Those who follow Christ, that is, the church of Christ, believe with all their hearts that nothing belongs to Christianity that Christ has not authorized. Upon such a principle it is safe to stand.

3. The church of Christ gives preeminence to Christ in all things.

This is the will of God according to Paul, *“And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence”* (Col. 1:18). Men exalt doctrines, methods of procedure, and many other things and give them the preeminence in many ways, but those who are simple servants of Christ must exalt only Christ. Faithful members of the Lord's church do not exalt one doctrine above another. We believe with James, *“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he became guilty of all”* (James 2:10).

Men do not have the right to sit in judgment upon the Word of God and decide which commandments to obey and which to ignore. It is just as disrespectful of divine authority to set

God's Word aside at one point as at another. Yet in many ways men make distinctions that God has not made. For instance, why would men name themselves religiously after some ordinance — such as the Baptists have done? They have put so much stress on the proper action of baptism that they have actually adopted the name of the ordinance as their religious name and thus have given it the preeminence over Christ. Methodists are guilty of the same thing for they have exalted “method” above Christ by the very name they wear. Presbyterians are likewise guilty of giving the doctrine of the presbytery precedence over Christ. Catholics have exalted the idea of the universal nature of Christianity above Christ. Christians have never exalted one doctrine of Christianity above another, but have always exalted Christ above every other consideration and undertaken to honor all that Christ has taught by striving to keep it and teach the world to do so.

4. The church of Christ is built after the divine pattern in its organization.

The church in this world is the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose (Eph. 3:10). God designed the church and He is the Divine Architect who planned it in all of its details. God planned the church exactly as He planned the tabernacle in the wilderness. When He took Moses into the mountain and gave him the pattern of the tabernacle, He set forth even the details concerning it. Its length, height, breadth, its different divisions, the material out of which it was to be built, and in all of its peculiarities, God designed it and gave to Moses the plan. He even told Moses what pieces of furniture were to go with it. Not one single part of the tabernacle was left up to Moses or the congregation of Israel. When the plan had been given, God said to Moses, “*See that you build all things according to the pattern given thee in the mount.*” Paul refers to this very charge and applies it to the

church today (Heb. 8:1-5). The church of God then must be built according to the divine pattern.

If a single part of that pattern is changed, God's will has not been done. We are not left to guess about the organization of the church of Christ. Not one single detail of its organization has been left up to us. Every particular part of the church has been planned, and in order for the God of heaven to recognize it as His own, it must be built after the divine pattern. The New Testament scriptures give us the divine pattern of the church.

Christ is the only Head of the church. He exercises universal authority over it. No member in the church anywhere has any right or privilege beyond that which Christ has given. The only authority any member has is to do the will of Christ. This is the picture of the church universal with Christ, as the Chief Shepherd of our souls.

The church, however, has a local organization, subject to the authority of Christ, and in existence only because Christ has authorized it. In every community, Christians are brought together in a local body. That body is a congregation of Christians. They assemble to worship in accordance with divine authority. They carry on the work of preaching the Gospel, ministering to the poor among them, and edifying one another under the direction of the Word of the Lord. To the church in this capacity Paul wrote, *"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, even them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place."* Thus we see the church in the local sense. It was characterized as *"the church of God which is at Corinth"* because it existed by God's authority and through His grace, and was made up of those who had been called out of the world in obedience of the Gospel of Christ, and having been

saved and sanctified were added together to be God's church in that community. Thus the church came into existence at Jerusalem (Acts 2:41). This same thing happened when people in any community heard the Gospel preached, believed and obeyed it (Acts 18:8).

In these congregations of Christ located in different communities God ordained that elders should have the rule and oversight. The order was *"Elders in every church"* (Acts 14:23). *"And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord."* Contrary to the order of government in many churches today, New Testament churches did not have one elder over a church, or one elder over several churches, but they had two or more "elders" in "every church." This is God's will and plan.

It cannot be improved upon and cannot be changed without God being disregarded and disobeyed. Here is the blueprint; we must follow it or depart from the divine plan. Paul wrote Titus and said, *"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge."* The inference here is that there was one congregation to the city, and therefore elders in every city. They were not city officials, but officials in the church of the Lord. These elders were the "bishops" and "pastors" of the churches where they had the rule. The only diocese that a Bible bishop ever had was the local church. In Acts 20:17, the record tells us, *"And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church."* Then when Paul addressed these Ephesian elders we hear him saying, *"Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you 'bishops,' to feed (pastor) the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood."* Here we learn that the elders are the bishops and do the pastoring. The same word which occurs

in Ephesians 4:11 and is rendered “pastor” in that verse occurs here and is rendered “feed.” The elders are to do this work in the church of the Lord.

In God’s plan the preachers are not the pastors unless they are elders also. The modern “pastor” idea comes from the Catholic priesthood and is not a Bible idea at all. There was not one pastor in a New Testament congregation but several of them over each congregation.

In addition to these men who serve as elders in the churches of the New Testament period, we have the pattern for having deacons in the church locally. Paul wrote to the church at Philippi, and addressed his letter *“To all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.”* So here is a church of the New Testament period that had “bishops and deacons.” These deacons were “special servants.” That is what the word means. They were assistants to the elders in the local work, and were to be ready to do whatever they might be called upon to do.

With preachers to preach, members to work, deacons to serve, and elders or bishops to supervise the work of the Lord, the church locally carried on its program under the authority of Christ. None of the members in any capacity in which he served had any authority except to do the will of the Lord. Even the elders could not rule arbitrarily, but had to be obedient themselves to the will of Christ in carrying out their work.

With this local arrangement the church of Christ was able to carry out the greatest program of missions in the New Testament age that has ever been executed in the history of religious movements. Christianity grew faster during the first thirty years after its establishment in this world than any religious

movement has ever grown since and this great success was achieved without the aid of any human organization like a “missionary society,” or anything like it.

If we would see how the church of the Lord carried out its missionary work, then let us look at Paul and the church at Antioch. The church there “*sent them away*” (Acts 13:3) and when they returned from the first missionary journey, “*and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all things that God had done with them.*” Here is a preacher of Christ being sent out by the local church, and making his report to the local church when he returned. Such a divine pattern cannot be improved upon.

The same principle holds true in the divine pattern for doing benevolent work. In Acts 11:29, we read, “*And the disciples every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judea; which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.*” Their work of benevolence was done through the church of the Lord. Their contributions were placed in the hands of the elders of the local church for distribution. Could an example be any plainer than that?

What more do we want in the way of a precedent? Should not we be satisfied with God’s arrangement, and be willing to do God’s work in God’s own way without demonstrating unbelief by trying to improve upon God’s plan? If a man is not satisfied with God’s church just as God designed it and Christ built it, then he is not pleased to do the will of God and does not respect the Word of God. What is the difference between trying to improve upon God’s ways and God’s words? It would be just as well to try to write an improvement of the Bible as to try to build an improvement of God’s church. All of these hu-

man organizations, federations, societies of every sort and kind that fasten themselves upon the church are evidence of someone's dissatisfaction with God's plan for the church in this world.

These local churches were not banded together in some kind of federation, council, convention, or synod. They were independent, self-governing units of the Body of Christ, and each one free to carry on its own work under the authority of Christ. They could cooperate, and did so in carrying out their objectives, but always without surrendering their independent sovereignty by becoming joined into some organization larger than the local church. The church of Christ is universal with Christ as its head, and local with elders to oversee its work in accordance with the will of Christ. This is the sum total on the question of church organization. No Christian, satisfied with the Lord's plan, should be a member of anything else. The least departure from this divine arrangement of the church government is no more right than the Pope of Rome and his College of Cardinals. We should not be beguiled from the simplicity that is in Christ. Denominational organizations belong in the same category with the doctrines and commandments of men. They corrupt the religion of Jesus Christ. They are divisive and therefore destructive to the unity of God's people. None of them is as good as the church which Christ built.

5. The church of Christ accepts only the gospel of Christ as its creed.

A man's creed is what he believes. "Credo," a Latin verb, means, "I believe." To be a member of the church of Christ, one does not and cannot believe anything except the "Gospel of Christ." The only written creed the church of Christ has ever had is the New Testament. Whenever any church accepts any

human teaching, written or unwritten, it is no longer the church of Christ. From the Council of Nice until the present day men have been engaged in the creed-making business. The encyclicals of the Pope and his College of Cardinals make a voluminous creed which is the basis of Catholicism. This creed must be recognized in order for one to be a Catholic. Deny the authority of the Pope and you will be excommunicated when the Catholic Church finds it out, that is, if you happen to be a Catholic. But I can refuse to recognize the Pope the same as I would an Italian fruit vendor and still be in full fellowship with the church of Christ. I can break every Catholic rule and rebel against every church order issued by them and still be a follower of Christ and a Christian. You can't be a Catholic without the Catholic creed, and you can't be a Christian with it.

The same thing is true of every human creed on earth. Every one of them is just as good as another and none of them is worth the paper upon which it is printed from the viewpoint of truth and righteousness. Jesus condemned the doctrines and commandments of men as contrary to his will and therefore subversive and destructive to Christianity. The Baptist Church Manual, The Methodist Discipline, The Presbyterian Confession of Faith, and every human formulation of religious teaching and doctrine belong in the same class. None of them has one good thing that the Gospel of Christ does not contain, and none of the bad in them can be found in the Gospel of Christ. The Gospel of Christ is the one creed that needs no revision.

Human creeds are objectionable for a number of reasons.

First, human creeds are human — written by men, and therefore unreliable. *“It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps”* (Jer. 10:23).

Second, human creeds do not meet humanity's needs, therefore, they are insufficient. They are constantly in need of amendment, and the same authority that established them can amend them at will. The Gospel of Christ contains the mind of God (1 Cor. 2:10-13) and is not subject to amendment by man (Rev. 22:18; Gal. 1:6-8).

Third, human creeds must continually be revised and are therefore imperfect. Some creeds have been so radically revised that they now teach exactly contrary to what they once taught. If they were originally right, they are wrong now.

Fourth, human creeds have only human authority behind them and are therefore unenforceable. When your human creed gives you assurance that something is all right that Christ has said nothing about, what can be your assurance that Christ will recognize it in the judgment? The fact is, there is none. Men cannot bind what they think and want upon the Lord. We had just as well try to excuse one another from doing the will of the Lord. Men have no authority to excuse anyone from the commandments of Christ or grant any privileges that Christ has not granted.

Fifth, human creeds disagree and conflict with each other, therefore, they cannot all be right. When doctrines are contradictory they cannot both be right. When the Methodist Discipline says that scriptural baptism can be administered by sprinkling, pouring or immersion, according to the convenience or preference of the candidate, and the Baptist Church Manual says that it may be administered by immersion only, someone is wrong. Both cannot be right. There is but one way to find out which is right and which is wrong and that is by laying both aside and going to the Word of God to learn the truth. In many other instances this same conflict is seen between

human creeds. Since they will prove anything, according to the one to which you refer, in order to establish the truth we must come away from them and to the Word of God.

Sixth, all human creeds conflict at some point with the plain teaching of Christ and they are therefore all wrong. There is not a single human creed in existence but that is in plain, definite conflict with some positive statement from the Word of God. Therefore, they should be laid forever aside and forgotten. The Gospel of Christ is the only rule of faith and practice that any plain church of Christ has ever adopted. As simple Christians we believe, preach, and try to practice everything in the Gospel of Christ, and will not believe, teach, or practice anything that is not in it.

6. Churches of Christ do not employ any human innovations in their worship.

Efforts to worship God are more often guided by the desires of men than by the will of God. It is the position of every church of Christ that nothing should be injected into Christian worship that has not been authorized by Christ. Acceptable worship must be in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Ignorant worship is not acceptable (Acts 15:7). We must, therefore, keep in mind that worship is directed toward God and if God is not pleased by our worship, then we worship in vain. It does not matter how uplifting it may be to us, or how spiritual it may seem, if our worship is not according to Spirit and truth, we have accomplished nothing so far as pleasing God is concerned. This being true, the only standard of acceptable worship is divine truth. Worship must be patterned after God's will and not the will of man.

The pattern of worship is easily discovered in the New Testament. In the history of the first congregation of Christ established upon the earth, in Jerusalem, we read, *“And they continued steadfastly in the apostle’s teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers”* (Acts 2:42). Here are the items of their worship. In finding the procedure with which they carried them out, we turn to Acts 20:7: *“And upon the first day of the week when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them.”* The day of their assembly was on “the first day of the week.” This day is the same as the Lord’s day of which John speaks (Rev. 1:10). The distinguishing feature of this assembly on the first day of the week was “breaking bread,” or the observance of the Lord’s Supper. In this first day assembly they likewise contributed of their means according to their ability, and thus had fellowship in the work of the Lord. They did not finance the work of the church with box suppers, ice cream socials, old clothes bazaars, or benefit parties of some kind. They worked with their hands and made money, and then contributed according to their ability.

In their worship they sang the praises of God, and did not use instrumental music. A study of the passages in the New Testament on this point will make this truth obvious to any honest man (Matt. 26:30, Acts 16:25, Rom. 15:9, 1 Cor. 14:15, Eph. 5:19, Col. 3:16, Heb. 2:12, James 5:13).

This is the sum total of divine authority for any kind of music in the church of the Lord. Christ has authorized no other kind. The command to sing is specific and excludes all other kinds of music. Just as water excludes every other element in baptism; just as gopher wood excluded every other kind of wood in the ark (Gen. 6:15); just as the lamb excluded every other animal in the atoning sacrifice (Lev. 16); so sing excludes every

other kind of music. There are only two kinds, vocal and instrumental, and God has selected vocal as the means of our praise (Heb. 13:15). When something more is done than “sing,” God has been disobeyed (2 John 9-11). New Testament scriptures are sufficient on these points as on all others pertaining to Christian worship and service (2 Peter 1:2, 3; Rom. 1:17).

Among all arguments that instrumental music advocates have brought up, there is one that never yet has been made. No one has ever said that instrumental music should be added to the worship because New Testament scriptures, as we have them given to us today by the good providence of God, teach that we should use it. Not one passage has ever been produced which even indirectly mentions mechanical instruments of music.

Churches of Christ have always been satisfied to worship as Christ has directed, and are unwilling to inject into the worship anything that Christ has not authorized. If Christ has not mentioned it, if the apostles did not preach it, if the New Testament Church did not practice it, then it does not belong to the religion of Christ.

Protestant denominations have adopted instrumental music, candle light communion services, wearing of religious robes, observance of holy days such as Easter, and a lot of other things from Catholicism. These and many others such as sprinkling for baptism were originated by Catholic authority. They are authorized by the Pope and not by Christ. They belong to Catholicism and not to Christianity.

7. The church of Christ refuses all human names and recognizes only the divinely given name of Christ.

The plea in the religious world is that there is nothing in a name anyway, and that one name is as good as another. Such a plea disputes with God and His Word. Concerning the name of Christ, Paul wrote, *“Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name”* (Phil. 2:9). Then no other name is as good as the name of Christ. Furthermore, we read again, *“And whatsoever you do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus”* (Col. 3:17). That means that nothing can be done in any other name. Then again, Peter tells us, *“But if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name.”* That is possible of no other name and is said of no other. Finally, Peter by inspiration declared, *“He is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which was made the head of the corner, and in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved”* (Acts 4:11, 12). Hence there is no other name under heaven in which salvation is possible.

Here is the testimony concerning wearing the name of Christ: no other name as good as the name of Christ; do nothing in any other name but the name of Christ; glorify God in the name of Christ; and no other name but the name of Christ. That should forever banish every human name in religion for those who respect the authority of the Word of God. The church must wear a scriptural name. It was called *“The church of God”* (1 Tim. 3:15) and *“churches of Christ”* (Rom. 16:16), referring to more than one congregation of the same faith and order. Individual members were called Christians (Acts 12:26). These names are sufficient.

8. The church of Christ makes a consistent plea for Christian unity.

Christ prayed for the unity of those who believed upon him through the words preached by the apostles (John 17:20, 21). Paul condemned the divisions that existed among Corinthian Christians (1 Cor. 1:10-17). Divisions and factions are listed among the works of the flesh that condemn (Gal. 5:19-21). From these passages and many more it is evident that division and denominationalism are wrong in the sight of the Lord. Denominationalism holds before the world a divided Christ and is therefore destructive to the plea of Christ. As long, however, as denominations hold to human names and human creeds, unity is impossible. These are the great barriers to unity among religious people. One human name will not be sacrificed for another. One human creed will not be given up to be replaced by another. One human organization will not be disbanded simply for membership in another.

Members of churches of Christ do not plead that men should give up one thing that is human for another thing that is human. We have no human name to offer. We therefore plead that men should give up human names for the name of Christ. We have no human creed that stands in the way of unity: We plead with men to forsake all human creeds and stand with us upon the Gospel of Christ as our only rule of faith and practice. We have no sectarian organization of any kind or character for men to join. We plead for men to obey the Gospel, let God add them to His church, be just a Christian only and nothing more. This we believe is the will of the Lord and all men should be willing to do it. Such a plea is consistent and cannot be wrong. Members of the church of the Lord can consistently plead for unity for which Christ prayed.

9. The church of Christ has only a spiritual mission in the world.

The church of Christ has never sought to be a political force such as Catholicism is, for we believe that the church is spiritual in its design and mission. The saving of souls by the preaching of the Gospel is the work of the church. God ordained civil government to direct and control matters political. The home has been established through divine wisdom as the center and circumference of human society. It is not the business of the church to furnish entertainment for anybody. It is the business of the church to work in the interest of the souls of men, and that alone through the teaching and preaching of the Gospel of Christ. When the church begins to serve political and social purposes, it has been prostituted from its high and holy mission given it by the will of the God of heaven.

10. In becoming a member of the church of Christ there are no human requirements that must be met.

In New Testament times, people heard the Gospel preached, believed it and obeyed it, and were added to the church of the Lord. The same process that saved them from sins, put them into Christ, and added them to the church. There is no such thing taught in the Bible as being saved by one procedure and then joining the church of your choice by another procedure. Such is the teaching of men and not of Christ. Jesus said, *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”* (Mark 16:16). Paul by the Spirit declared, *“For ye are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ”* (Gal. 3:26-27). Luke under the direction of the Spirit records for us, *“They then that received His word were baptized; and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls”* (Acts 2:41). Thus we see that when a man believes and is baptized, he is saved, he has put on Christ and is added to the church. All this happens by the same process and through the same obedience. If men do this

today, God will save them, put them into Christ, and add them to His church now just as He did then.

Our plea is for you to do the will of the Lord, obey His Word to become a Christian, only that, and wear only His name, serving through the church built by Him, accomplishing His purpose in your life, that by and by when the darkness of night has passed and the morning of eternal day shall dawn, you may stand upon the promises of His word and receive the salvation of your soul.